

DIVINE LOVE.

A Funeral Oration

ON THE

DEATH OF THE LATE DR. ADAM CLARKE,

DELIVERED IN FRENCH

AT GREAT QUEEN-STREET CHAPEL, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

SEPT. 18, 1832.

BY DR. L. GIUSTINIANI,

EX-CHAPLAIN TO HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA, NOW MISSIONARY
IN THE METHODIST CONNEXION.

TRANSLATED BY W. K. TOASE.

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DR. L. GIUSTINIANI
LONDON, NEW JERSEY

*Extract of a Letter from the Author of the following
Discourse to the Translator.*

“ Respecting the publication of my Discourse, I readily consent to it, as I am aware of your intention of devoting the profits to the missionary cause, and shall feel great pleasure in being, in any way whatever, a medium through which the religion of Christ may, though in a small degree, be advanced. Willingly, with such a consideration, will I expose myself to public criticism ; for the reproach of the Cross is sweeter than the treasures of Egypt.

“ *Gravesend, Sept. 16, 1832.*”

FUNERAL ORATION.

1 CORINTHIANS II. 9.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

WHILST the cries of grief, and the groanings of desolation, are rapidly flying from pole to pole; during the apparent suspension of the sweet consoling accents of hope; yea, while even the vast torture of our feelings seems to suspend for a moment "our rejoicing in the Lord,"—at such a moment as this, a moment pregnant with intensity of anguish, would I, my brethren, address you. I would announce to you those things "which confound the princes of this world;" things which philosophy itself can never teach you, and which "have never entered into the heart of man."

God, in the distribution of his mercies, destined this world not only as the theatre of your actions, but also as the object of your study. In the deep abysses of nature lie hid innumerable secrets, inviting your contemplation; innumerable truths, encouraging the perseverance of your researches. To penetrate those secrets; to enjoy the pleasures of those truths, requires a mind endowed with certain intellectual faculties—a mind well exercised in the mysteries of nature.

But enough; the disposition of the heart has no direct influence whatever on the acquisition of such knowledge.

It is with this knowledge as with the rain which "God causes to fall upon the just as well as upon the unjust"—as the sun which he "causes to shine upon the evil as well as upon the good." Knowledge without religion sees no necessity for an upright heart or a benevolent disposition. How deplorable it is to see, alas! too often, the brightest intellectual genius united with sordid egotism and dissipated manners. God appears, impartially, to present the beauties of human science to the consideration of his enemies as well as of his friends; but not so has he disposed of religious truth, for our text says, "He hath prepared for them that love him,"—not that the wise, or men of genius, are excluded from possessing the pleasures of the Gospel, but that in the contemplation of this, neither wisdom nor genius are sufficient, as in the deciphering of other sciences. Faith and love are necessary; and the love of God is the only true interpreter of the truths of the Gospel. The wisdom and principalities of this world are vanquished by the simplicity of love. Love is wisdom, confirming the words of God, "They that love God, know God." God and man, then, are placed in similar circumstances to two foreigners, whose languages are perfectly unintelligible to each other; an interpreter is necessary, to whom the two different tongues are familiar; who, listening to the words of the one, translates them to the understanding of the other. Now between God and man—between the Gospel and our souls, this interpreter is love. Love unfolds to man the mysteries of the Gospel, though not those mysteries which, abstractedly, relate to the essence of Deity. No, those mysteries are as totally inaccessible by us as they are useless to us; but through this potent mediator, those deep truths approximating us to God, are fully and satisfactorily developed. These are the truths, at the consideration of which even philosophy recoils as inexplicable, but which love expounds with a pleasing familiarity.

Perhaps you startle to find that the study of this subject, which appears to require the exercise of reason only, is built upon the stable basis of love, and has its development in the sentiments of the heart. For, remember, by far the greatest portion of our knowledge is not derived immediately from the exercise of reason. When, for instance, you would study any object in nature, the first ideas are conveyed to your minds through the medium of your senses, and not of your reason. Thus it is, by exercising the sense of vision, that we appreciate the extent and form of objects; by the ear, we form our ideas of sounds; and by the nose, of different odours. Reason, then, it must necessarily follow, is not the primary, much less the only source of our knowledge, but a combination of our senses and of our reason; though at the same time, who can doubt the importance of the assistance of reason?—who can for a moment suppose that the knowledge of sensible objects is to be derived solely from the exercise of the senses, or to be effectually contemplated without the aid of reason?

In the moral world also the same rule holds good: it is not by intelligence alone, however highly developed, that we can judge of matters of this kind. Here also, for a sufficient understanding of their nature, we must call to our assistance the exercise of sense—that sense called moral. Intelligence, truly, may be a most valuable auxiliary; it may facilitate our observations; class and compare those observations; but it can never produce them. Indeed, the things of the heart can never be truly understood but by the heart.

In endeavouring to explain this, let us, on the one hand, suppose a man endowed with generosity and heroism, and possessing a mind burning incessantly with the noble flame of devotion; and on the other, a man of immense intelligence, or possessed of a vast and profound reason, but deprived (if possible) of all sensibility. Think you not that the former would be a perpetual

enigma to the latter? For how is it possible for the latter ever to possess the ebullitions of enthusiasm, or submit to the absorbing influence of oratory, seeing the source has never existed in him?

Again, the spiritual man: as it is said in the chapter from which we have selected our text, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet (excepting by the spiritual) he himself is judged of no man;" let us for a moment apply this passage to the generous and sensitive individual just described. No one is capable of judging of him in whom the germ of opinions and sentiments the same as his own does not exist. This same principle has caused many to say that great minds pass through the world without being known.

Once more,—how frequently are particular religious manifestations regarded as affectation and hypocrisy! What! the glow of animated warmth, encircling the whole soul, developing its most latent faculties, springing, returning, and respringing from its deepest recesses, appears too amazing for the comprehension of the narrow limits of the intellects of some, or too strange for the sordid egotism of others, to believe! Let these but only try the effects of its operations, and then disbelieve! But, no! rather than believe, they are content to remain in total ignorance, continuing to tax sentiments, perhaps the most benign and undissimulating, with hypocrisy and affectation; not even allowing them credit for one tenth of their value. How common the error! All the most active efforts of intelligence can never give us the flavour of a fruit we have never tasted—the perfume of a flower we had never smelt—nor the sensation of an affection, the fire of which has never burned within our bosoms!

There is sublimity of soul, as there is the magnificence of the firmament. When on a night smiling under the hallowing influence of its serenity, with myriads of celestial bodies bespangling the front of heaven; when the refulgent brilliance of the starry arch shines bright upon

the night-wrapped surface of the slumbering globe; when such a scene as this presents itself, is it not more than sufficient to enrapture such as possess the blessings of vision? But to those who, by the dispensations of Providence, are refused the benefit of such vision, how vain the fervour of their intellects—the capaciousness of their minds—the loftiness of their conceptions! All this intelligence, and all the power of mind which might yet be concentrated by continued study, will give them not the least assistance in forming any idea of the splendour of this enchanting spectacle. While, on the other hand, a man without talent, uncultivated, nay, even ignorant, has but to raise his eyelids, and at once he distinguishes between the splendour of one star, and the magnificence of another; and, through the medium of his eyes, forms some impressions on his mind which the contemplation of a scene so grand can never fail to produce.

Another sky, far more magnificent than the vaulted azure extended over your heads, presents itself to your regard, in the beauties of the Gospel. Stars, shining far more brilliantly, bespangle the surface of this majestic sky! Divine truths are those luminaries! But a proper eye is necessary with which to view them—this eye, my brethren, is DIVINE LOVE! The Gospel is a work of love. Christianity is nothing but love in its greatest simplicity. And, as the great luminary of this universe can only be contemplated through the eye, love can only be understood by love.

My brethren, I have already occupied much of your time with metaphor; it is now proper that I should tell you that this “generous man,” this “hero,” this soul, “burning incessantly with the noble flame of devotion,” this “heart of simplicity,” this “rapid intelligence,” and this “vast and profound reason,” were all concentrated in the late DR. ADAM CLARKE. The name is no sooner pronounced, than the eulogium is finished.

It was love which incessantly inflamed his soul ; eagerness after the pursuit of love and truth, which rendered so intelligible to him the mysteries of the Gospel. It was love which sustained him from the moment of his quitting the paternal roof, and launching in the vast ocean of thought—which supported him in all the dark vicissitudes of time—and which conducted him safely over the miry tracts of doubt, to the peaceful and placid haven of stability. Neither did love forsake him in the last moments of his mortal existence, when, to the remark of his friend, who said, “ Doctor, you should prepare yourself to appear before the throne of God,” he answered, with calm confidence, his eyes raised up to heaven, and his hands clasped together in the solemnity of prayer, “ I have done that already.” It was love which confirmed his hope, and rendered visible that which he had not seen.

He was a man of genius ; but, while genius held a portion of his heart, love governed the whole. This is why I have chosen to speak of his love : for while, by his talents, he was a citizen of the whole literary world, and, by his biblical researches, belonged indiscriminately to all societies, yet the throbbings of his heart belonged to us, and to us only. His heart was imbued with Methodism. For this we praise the God of mercies, who touches with efficacy the heart of man, and who touched the heart of Dr. Clarke.

It is not my wish to occupy your attention, or fill up the time allotted for this feeble discourse, with a list of the literary merits of this great man, or talk of the rapidity, magnitude, and justice, of his admirable genius ; nor of the power and flexibility of his language ; nor of the abundance and warmth of his affections. I shall also pass over the consideration of the simplicity and plenitude of grace developed in his manner, and the piety and vivacity of his spirit. And what can I say of a man who, with literature has united philosophy ;

with morality, piety; with criticism, depth of knowledge; and sensibility of taste, to delicacy of matter? What originality is there not exhibited in even his works of imitation and translation! What rare and happy accordances and harmonies of thought and simile! which eloquence and beauty of description will always be the wonder of the sensitive heart, and the ambition of the highest intellects. To present you with a tablet of his Commentary on the Bible, neither the small space allotted to a sermon, nor my feeble talents would suffice. The Doctor's own renown is far more eloquent. Already has it filled the whole of Europe; already does the New Continent reverberate his praise, and register his name in the lasting annals of their literary societies. His Commentary alone is a lasting monument of his fame, and will transmit his name to the most distant posterity.

Is it, then, surprising that both the Irish Academy, and the Academy of Antiquities, should decorate their annals with the illustrious name of Adam Clarke?—Is it surprising, then, that the most distinguished persons, and most renowned nobility of England, should have treated him with honour and respect?—But enough! I promised to speak of his heart, not of his literary merits; and I am certain, on this point, you will continue to give me your serious attention.

Ah! Methodists, confess, and glory, that in the heart only reside the qualifications of a true Christian; it is LOVE which rallies and supports us with patience amid the temptations of this life—which unites us to our Saviour—in a word, which makes us Methodists!

Unhappy that man who builds his hope on any other foundation than that of the love of Christ! Wretched, thrice wretched, that man who carries not in his bosom this life and nourishment! It is from the heart that the most elevated sentiments, the most noble effects, the most magnanimous actions, generate. From this source springs the precious tear-drops of tenderness and pity—

of joy and consolation. Through the heart, the pleasures of this life are rendered precious, while its evils find comfort and alleviation. For which reason, the sacred Scriptures recommend the watching rather of our hearts than of our minds.

It has been said, that the journals have spoken so much of the Doctor, that the orator could find nothing new to present to public admiration. Erroneous assertion! We venerate and honour the author of this statement, but we must differ from him on that point. The object of our present consideration, in his life was modest, humble, retired; his passion—study; the glory of God, and the advancement of the reign of Christ, his sole desire; and his character, a type of benevolence; whilst his numerous works attest the extent of his labour, diligence, and talent, which have procured such renown to the author, and praise to the Wesleyan family. Of these the journals have said nothing, nor will they ever say sufficient; each orator will find new matter, each pen new colours to trace over the tablet of his memory. The virtues of the heart, which are piety, the love of God, of mankind, and of country, can never be too highly or, indeed, sufficiently spoken of. His character was mild, conforming to divine love; and love inspired his actions and his words, and traced the movements of his brilliant physiognomy. By his love he attracted, with a sort of secret force, those who had once associated with him, almost compelling them to cultivate his intercourse. The love of God was imprinted in all his discourses, and diffused through all his writings, that even persons far distant, stimulated by the power of his pen, aspired with their whole soul after the same affection. His love for the kingdom of God rendered him modest, humble, and exemplary in his manners; calm, gentle, and compassionate to the defects of others, and to commiserate the wants of the poor. Indeed, his only interest was the love of conducting sinners to the cross of Christ. Ah! my brethren, the

love of Dr. Clarke was great ! Had his heart been possessed only by a sentiment of legal justice, limited indeed would have been his usefulness ; confined indeed the distribution of his benefits ; but obedient, because he loved, loving him who cannot be too much loved, he abandoned himself to the impressions of his heart, as the world abandons itself to its passions. " Who loveth his body hateth his soul." He never said, It is enough ; no, he feared to lose his love the moment he should say to it, " Thus far shalt thou go, and no further." And what virtue is there with which Providence did not adorn him ? The love of all that which is good, pure, or holy, became to him such a habit, such a moral law, that it was not only a merit of his heart, but also a privilege of his character.

He was a man of prayer. The Holy Scriptures taught him that prayer was the means of obtaining the grace of God,—that prayer was a power at which the might of Omnipotence itself would bow down,—that " the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much." At such an idea philosophy is confounded. But, ah ! this doctrine was sweet to his thirsty soul. How natural and how necessary it was he often felt when his heart was encompassed with embarrassments, when his soul was hurried on towards the slough of despond ! And how miserable and fallacious appeared to him the wisdom of those, who put their trust in a religion destitute of prayer !

O ! my brethren, what more can I tell you ? What other language can I use, or you listen to, but to the lamentations of one brother at the tomb of another ! What other comfort offer to the dear memory of his virtues, than bitter tears !

O ! happy soul, thou art doubtless re-ascended to that luminous sphere from whence thou camest, united with thy Redeemer, and rejoicing in that celestial kingdom in the presence of the Father, whom thou served with such

avidity whilst amongst us; and while basking in the Source of all perfection and eternal life, thou seest that heaven which had so long embraced thy sole thoughts and affections. Perhaps in thy happy contemplation above of these divine mercies, thy mind may once again recal the joys and griefs, the pleasures and sorrows of this earthly country, and perhaps even the memory of this same pulpit, from which thou hast so often announced the words of salvation; so often presented to the dying world a Saviour! O! if in thine heavenly abode this voice should catch thine ear, disdain it not! receive from my gratitude, from my tenderness, from my whole self, this tribute which I offer to thy memory. And O! great God, may thy sweet consolations dry up our tears, and give comfort and support to our affliction. Heavenly Father! thou only canst give us consolation; our loss is irreparable, if thy grace, thy loving kindness, do not fill up this vacuum in our breasts.

But, my brethren, to you now would I direct the words of peace—to you who believe in Christianity, and receive it as a divine religion—but more particularly to you who see it only as “through a glass darkly.” To such of you it is dead as long as it does not penetrate your hearts, and as long as you refuse to receive its counsels. There are amongst men many who have turned round and round in their minds the Christian religion, as round an impenetrable sanctuary, knocking again and again at every gate which presents itself without gaining admittance, returning without success from those doors which had already been many times knocked at before, believing at one time, then disbelieving; Christians in their desires, but Pagans in their faith; convinced, but not persuaded; enlightened, but not consoled. To such as these I would particularly address myself; I would appeal to their sincerity and ask them, how comes it, that you believing, have as yet received only the burden and not the bounty of your faith? How comes it that you carry your faith

as a troublesome and heavy yoke, and not as the wings which should support you above the miseries of this sub-lunary world? How is it, that in the very bosom of this religion which you have accepted, and in which you are enrolled, that you are as in a strange country, as out of your natural atmosphere? How is it that while even *at* the house, you are not *in* the house of your Father? See here the reason! It is because your hearts are not yet touched. The "heart of Lydia must be open to comprehend the thing which Paul would teach her." So must your hearts open to comprehend the things which the heart only can understand. Or, in the energetic language of Scripture, the heart of stone must become a heart of flesh.

Alas! with a conviction the most solid, an orthodoxy the most complete, how many are total strangers to the true faith! How many believers are still unbelievers! How many who never for a moment doubted the truth of the Scriptures, who read them assiduously, who even almost know them by heart, are yet unbelievers! Ah! my brethren, it is because faith derives not its existence from intelligence; but is divine in its origin. Study can convince, but grace alone can give us life. But read Dr. Clarke's sermon on "The love of God," and it will supply my defective service. The first lesson reason should teach should be, to refuse reasoning on all subjects through which reason cannot conduct you. But reason is proud, opiniative, and will yield to no one. What then does Jesus? He abandons it for a time to the struggles and insufficiency of its warfare, and when tired and despairing, when brought to see its total incapacity, and its necessity of instruction, then he avails himself of its humiliation; lifting his hand upon this tired and bruised soul he drives it to seek quarter, to seek grace. Then does reason abase itself; reason bows down and cries after that succour it had once despised. Then does it wish only to believe; no longer aspiring after compre-

hension, but after life. The soul resumes its functions, and takes the place of reason. The perverse and wicked heart becomes such as Jesus would have it. Ah! then, hasten to the Eternal Throne, groaning under the weight of your transgressions and the number of your sins; cry for succour, and succour will be received from above. "Believe, and ye shall be saved." Open your eyes and the light shall illumine you, and you shall walk no longer in darkness. Ask for grace, and grace shall be given and abundantly multiplied unto you. Seek support, and support shall be found of the Heavenly Father; Christ will be your support, your fortress, your shield, and your rock. Ask safety, and you shall have it. Ask! and to your miserable and penitent heart, all that which was refused to your proud and unbending one shall be abundantly granted! Amen.

FINIS.